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ABSTRACT

Readings and activities in this elementary school unit are designed to introduce students to Amish culture. Specific reference is made to the Amish communities in Iowa. Four lessons focus on the history of the Amish in the United States, Amish family life, community life, and customs (such as clothing and occupations) in modern Amish communities. Each lesson contains a brief reading passage accompanied by activities or worksheets. Following the lesson plans is a section of handout materials, including recipes, evaluation questions, a crossword puzzle, and role playing cards. A bibliography is appended. The document is one of a collection of materials from the Iowa Area Education Agency 7 Teacher Center Project. (LP)

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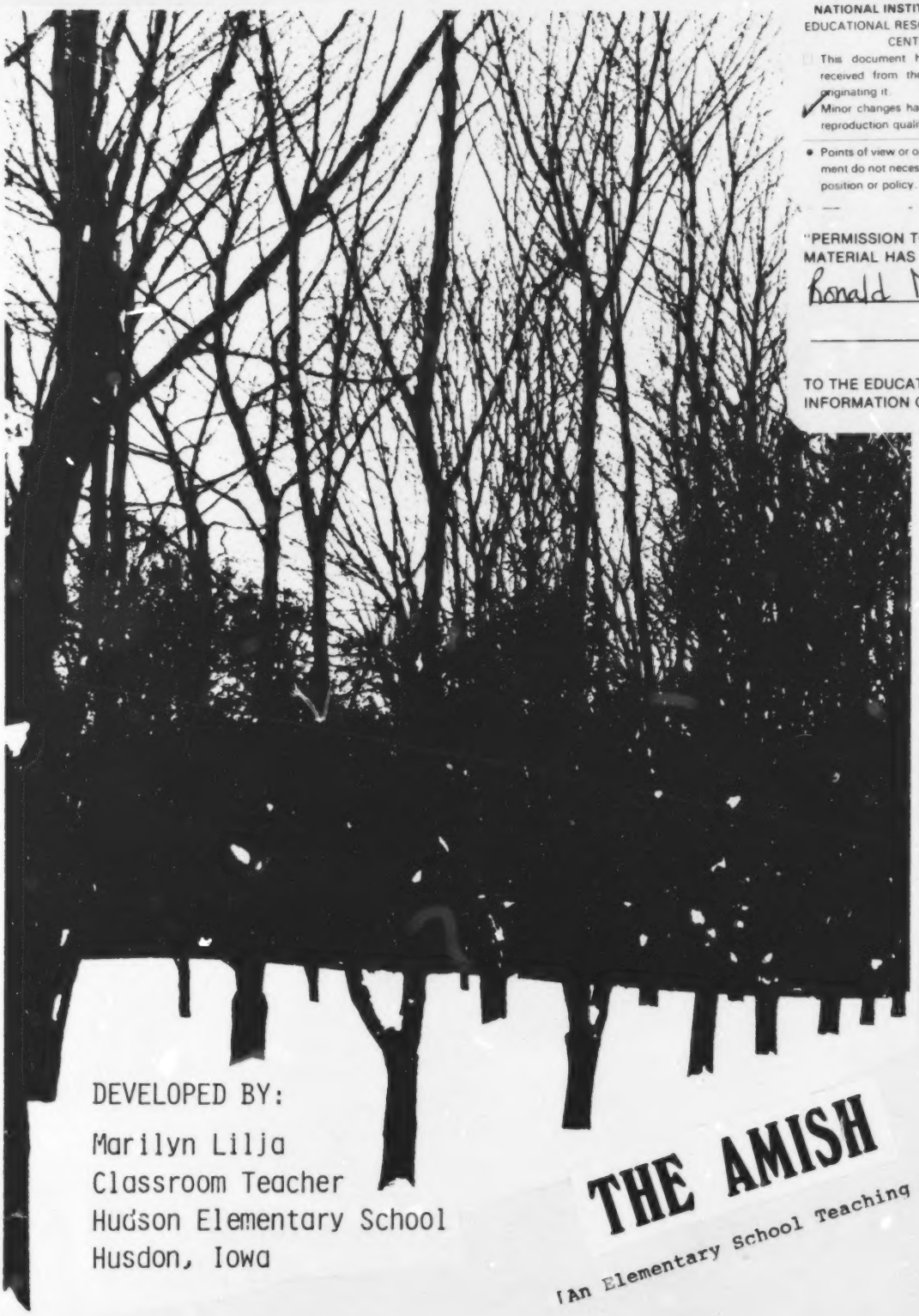

THE AMISH

[An Elementary School Teaching Unit]

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THE AMISH

Objectives:

1. The students will gain an awareness of the history of the Amish in America.
2. The students will understand the varying roles of each member of an Amish family.
3. The students will understand the similarities and/or differences of the Amish and non-Amish cultures.
4. The students will be able to describe how the Amish function as a community.
5. The students will gain an understanding of the degree of interaction of the modern Amish with the non-Amish community.

LESSON I. INTRODUCTION AND HISTORY

Do any of you know who the Amish people are? Do you know where they live? Have you ever seen an Amish person?

The Amish are a religious group who live much as people did one hundred years ago. They live in Iowa around Kalona, Hazelton and Milton. If you travel as near as Oelwein or Independence, you can often see them in their horse drawn carriages.

The Amish came to the United States about 250 years ago (approximately 1730). A group of people who lived in Switzerland were known as the Anabaptists. They were baptized as adults rather than as children, and because they were different they were physically persecuted. (Explain persecution.) Jacob Amman

disagreed with some of the tenets taught by this group, and he decided to break away and start his own church. This group was called "Amish" after him. They were still persecuted, though not physically. They weren't allowed to attend the schools, nor to hold church services. Many moved to France, and then William Penn invited them to Pennsylvania. Amman himself was unable to go, but he told his followers to "remain the same." This was taken literally, and that is what they still do. Some of them stayed in Pennsylvania, and others moved on to Ohio and Iowa, as well as further across the country. In the eastern United States they were known as the Pennsylvania Dutch. This name was a misunderstanding of the name "Pennsylvania Deutsch" (Doy-tsch). Deutsch is the German word that means German. They were, in other words, the Pennsylvania Germans.

Procedure:

1. Read the above background.
2. Use the filmstrip A Pioneer Heritage by American Pageant Films. (In our school this is in the High School collection.) Or AEA film, The Amish, #3871.
3. Discuss filmstrip or film

   OR

2. Use an opaque projector and project some of the pictures from the Zielinski book, The Amish. Information in the bibliography.
3. Discuss

Activities:

1. To help students understand the difficulties a foreign-born person might experience in a new country, ask each to pretend he/she is living in an Oriental country, and discuss the following ideas:

a. How would you communicate?

b. What would these people think of your clothes, hair style, manners?

c. How might you be treated because you look, speak and act differently?

d. How would you buy food or find a place to live?

e. How do you think you would be able to learn the language?

f. What problems would you have adjusting to a different kind of government and laws?

g. Would you spend more time with the Americans there? Why?

2. Have the children look up information on the Amish in encyclopedias or the books listed in the bibliography. They may write reports or share the information some way with the class later in the unit. It may be a play diorama, illustrations, etc.

3. Have the students find out why their families came to America, if possible. If they do, have them share the information.

4. Describe an ocean crossing. What would it be like? What would the ship be like? How would you feel?

Conclusion:

Help the children to understand that the Amish people came to the United States because of religious persecution.

LESSON II. AMISH FAMILY LIFE

Yesterday we learned a bit about the history of the Amish people. They came to the United States from Europe because of religious persecution. They settled in Pennsylvania, and then some moved in small groups to the west. Today we will learn about the Amish family and how each member fills a role assigned by tradition.

The Old Order Amish have adhered to their traditional European customs in spite of outside pressures to assimilate them into the modern world. The father in the family is the authority figure. He is concerned with the farm and with ascertaining that the family can grow all, or almost all, of its food. The sons learn to help the father. The mother's role is centered in the house, and the girls learn to cook, clean and sew. They are all concerned primarily with the survival of the family. Only simple utilitarian furnishings are used. There is no electricity or telephone. Work is thought of as a blessing, and by age 4 the child is doing simple tasks. Large families are the rule because help is needed. Horses are the basic method of transportation both on and off the farm.

Procedure:

1. Read above background.
2. Read Amish Boy by Florence W. Rowland.
3. Discuss.

Activities:

1. Role play. Divide the class into groups. Each group will choose a card (see attached sheet) and act it out for the group.
2. Have individuals or groups write plays or stories.
3. Make bread or soap. (See attached recipes.)

Conclusion:

Help the class understand the traditional role of each family member.

LESSON III. AMISH COMMUNITY LIFE

Yesterday we read the story, Amish Boy, by Florence Rowland. In it we learned that the Amish family is very close knit, and that each member has his/her own role to play. Today we will look at how the Amish family functions as part of the community.

At age 16 young people begin to "court." This means they are beginning to think about marriage and to become acquainted with each other in a romantic way. Part of the courting ceremony is to ride out together in an open courting buggy. Courting is secretly done, and the engagement of the young people is not announced until 2 weeks before the wedding. Amish weddings are important social events for the community, and people come from all over. Amish babies are born under a doctor's supervision which is in accordance with their religion. Children are not baptized until they are in their teens. Before that any behavior against church rules is forgiven, because they are thought to be immature and forgivable.

Amish people have their own schools, and children attend only through eighth grade. Education doesn't deal with worldly things, but with practical and spiritual matters. Teachers aren't certificated, and this has led to court battles. In 1972 the Iowa Supreme Court said they could do as they chose. Children learn farming, child care, carpentry, etc. They also learn German.

The Amish are a sober, serious people, but fun and laughter have a part in their lives also. Baseball is a favorite recreation. Church holidays are celebrated, but not holidays like

our Fourth of July or Veteran's Day. When a tragedy occurs in a family the whole community turns out to help. This is done because they feel it is the responsibility of the group to care for their own. They don't have insurance to see them through catastrophes.

If you will think back to the first day you will remember that the Amish were persecuted in Europe, and not allowed to have church services. They met secretly in homes. This is still done in accordance with Amman's statement to "remain the same." There is no church building, and services move from home to home. Services are held every other week, and the benches are carried from house to house in a "buggy wagon."

Procedure:

1. Read and discuss the above background.
2. Share the reports from the first day.
3. Read "Just Plain Kids" (Jack and Jill) or "A Rare Visit to an Amish Home" (Iowan).

Activity:

1. Do the attached crossword puzzle as a review.

Conclusion:

Help the child to understand that the Amish community is a close knit group.

LESSON IV. AMISH CLOTHING AND THE MODERN AMISH COMMUNITY

Yesterday we learned about how the Amish family plays a part in the community, just as each family members plays a part in the family. Today we will learn about the way the Amish dress, and how they fit into the modern non-Amish community.

As you can tell from the pictures we saw in the filmstrip and in the Zielinski book the Amish are required to dress in a certain way. Men wear wide rimmed black hats and plain dark clothes. They must wear beards after they are married. Women wear long dark dresses, bonnets and shawls. The children dress much like the adults. Neither men nor women wear buttons nor anything ornamental. This has led to a nickname sometimes heard, the Hook and Eye Dutch. Almost all their clothing is homemade. However, in some areas, the men are beginning to buy plain jeans.

The Amish are very hardworking and reliable. Most Amish men work for themselves as farmers, carpenters or sawmill operators. Nowadays some Amish will work for non-Amish people because there are some things they need to buy, and therefore they need money. There are several Amish sects or groups, and some of these will more closely relate to the city and non-Amish.

The Amish people aren't interested in reforming the world. They want to be left alone to live their lives in harmony with God and His nature.

Procedure:

1. Read and discuss the above information.
2. Share remaining reports.

Activities:

1. List as many things as you can think of that are different about the Amish way of life.

2. Make a list of 10 adjectives that describe the Amish people.

3. Write a brief story about the life of an Amish child. Relate this to the modern community about him.

4. List 5 words you did not know.

Conclusion:

Help the children understand how their lives would be different if they lived in an Amish family.

Recipes

White Bread

½ C sugar
½ C shortening

Cream these ingredients together and add 3 C lukewarm water.

Dissolve one large cake of yeast in ½ C warm water
Mix 1½ tsp salt
¼ tsp ginger
9 C flour
Add this to the sugar-shortening mixture.
Make into loaves or biscuits.
Bake approximately 35-45 minutes at 375 degrees.

Homemade Soap

(Be very careful if you decide to do this. The lye is caustic and needs to be handled with great care.)

In a big earthen crock:
Dissolve 2 cans Lewis Lye in 2 quarts cold water. Cool.
Use wooden spoon or stick to stir.

Add 4 TB Borax
Melt to lukewarm, 16 C lard. Then pour into lye mixture and add 1 C ammonia

Stir frequently until thickened.

Pour into clothlined wooden box (a peach box, for example).
Cut before it gets too hard.

If you do not do this, discuss the process and the ingredients. How do they compare to our soap? Would you want to use soap made with these ingredients? Do you think it would do a good job?

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

True or False. Circle the correct letter.

T F 1. An Amish wedding is announced 6 months in advance.

T F 2. In Iowa the Amish live in Waterloo.

T F 3. Children are baptized as babies.

T F 4. Pennsylvania Dutch really comes from words meaning Pennsylvania German.

T F 5. Amish students are taught by Amish teachers.

T F 6. The Amish people can dress in any way they like.

T F 7. When a disaster strikes an Amish family they are helped by everyone in the community.

T F 8. Amish people have their own schools.

Multiple Choice

1. Amish homes have _____ furnishings.
   a. elaborate b. simple c. expensive d. factory manufactured

2. The man after whom the Amish are named is _____ _____.
   a. John Anderson b. Jacob Amman c. Jacob Amalek d. John Ames

3. The role of the Amish mother is centered in the _____.
   a. garden b. city c. home d. barn

4. Amish young people begin to court at age _____.
   a. 10 b. 20 c. 18 d. 16

5. A favorite recreation of Amish children is _____.
   a. baseball b. basketball c. soccer d. volleyball

6. Amish men are required to wear a beard when they _____.
   a. are married b. are 18 years old
   c. are baptized d. working outside the Amish community

7. The Amish live _____.
   a. in town with non-Amish b. in the suburbs of a big city
   c. outside a town, in their own community d. in a big city

Crossword Puzzle Clues - The Amish

Down

1 A sport both Amish children and non-Amish children enjoy is _____.

2 Amish children go to school through _____ grade.

3 The Amish live as they do because of Amman's instructions before they left for America to _____ ____ _____.

6 The _____ are a religious group of people who lived in Kalona, Hazelton and Milton, Iowa among other places.

10 Young Amish people who are "courting" ride out together in an open courting _____.

Across

4 _____ is a name by which these people were known in the eastern United States.

5 _____ is the man after whom the Amish are named.

7 One of the few pieces of clothing worn by the Amish that is not homemade is _____.

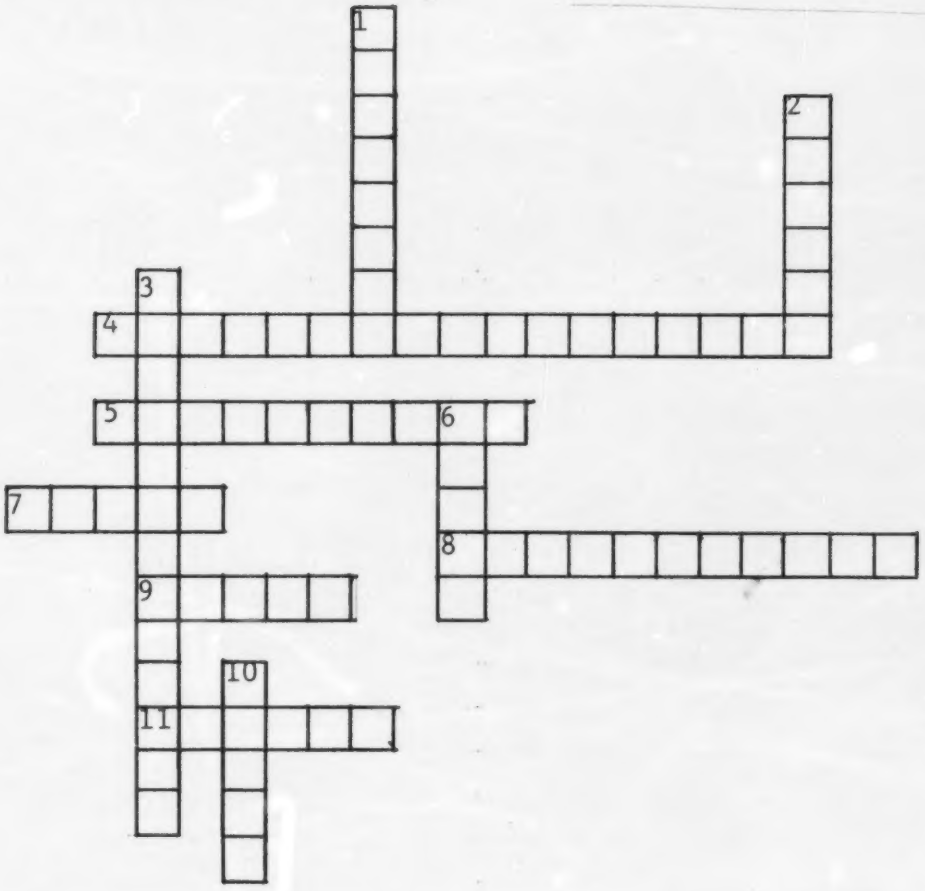
8 The people who became the Amish originally came from _____.

9 The animal used by the Amish to move their carriages is the _____ _____.

11 The Amish were baptized as _____, not children.

Words from which to choose:

jeans
Pennsylvania Dutch
adults
Jacob Amman
horse
Switzerland
Amish (used twice)
remain the same
baseball
eighth
buggy



ANSWERS:

Across:

4	Pennsylvania Dutch
5	Jacobamman
7	jeans
8	Switzerland
9	horse
11	adults

Down:

1	Baseball
2	eighth
3	Remain the same
6	Amish
10	buggy

ROLE PLAYING CARDS

1. Pretend that you are part of an Amish family traveling to America in the 1700's. What would it be like to travel on shipboard? Act it out for your classmates.

2. To show what a typical day in the life of an Amish boy or girl would be, some of you take the part of the Amish father and mother. The rest of you pretend to be the children. Show us what a day in summer would be like for an Amish family.

3. Act out what might happen in an Amish school. Remember that their education is practical everyday matters and spiritual areas. Remember also that Amish children always show respect for adults.

4. Show what the members of the Amish community would do if one of the homes of a community family was destroyed in a fire.

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